Developing a WFP Implementation Plan

The real "meat" of your Workforce Planning efforts will be in developing your implementation Work Plan. In putting together this plan, you will map out how you'll actually execute your Workforce Planning process. To do this, you will identify:

- The scope and objectives of your workforce plan.
- The metrics you'll use to determine your plan's success.
- The resources it will take to execute your workforce plan.
- The timeframe for your plan and guideposts for completing tasks.
- The staff who will be executing your plan and what their responsibilities will be.

It's important to keep in mind that there is no one best approach to Workforce Planning – you'll need to customize your workforce plan to fit your agency given its unique culture, history and environment.
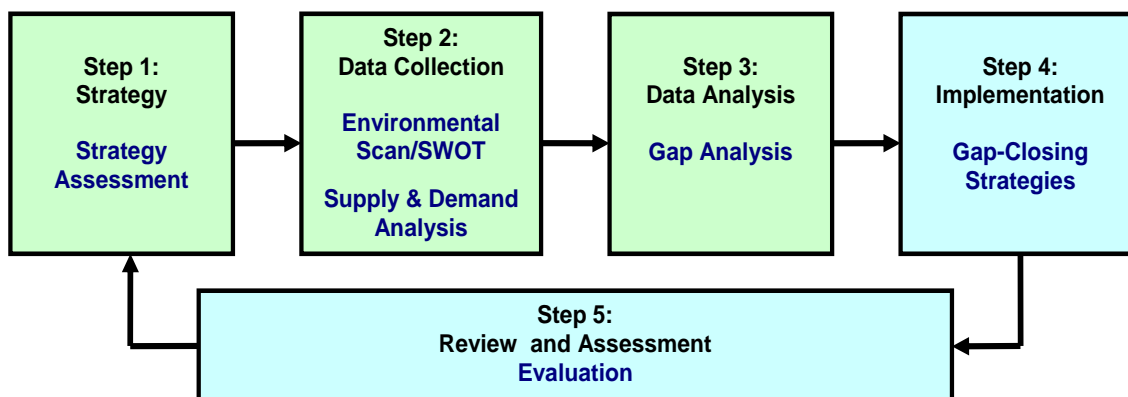
WFP Implementation Phases

Your WFP implementation plan will have two phases:

1. Phase I: Assessment
2. Phase II: Implementation and Evaluation

Phase I will include the first three steps of our WFP model; Phase II, Steps 4 and 5:

Workforce Planning Steps

Assessment in Phase I will include:

- **Strategy Assessment** – Review your strategic plans and the workforce implications of these plans.
- **Environmental Scan** – Conduct a SWOT analysis and a supply and demand analysis.
- **Gap Analysis** – Analyze your current talent against your future needs.

Implementation and evaluation includes:

- **Gap-Closing Strategies** – Develop a competency model for your recruitment and selection, performance management, and training and development strategies.
- **Evaluation** – Establish performance measures to determine the success of your workforce plan.

Building an Implementation Work Plan

Your WFP Project Team will be the core WFP "project management" group. Your WFP Project Team will:

- Design the WFP strategy and implementation plan.
- Ensure implementation of the WFP process.
- Evaluate the WFP process and the success of plan objectives and make appropriate changes.

Using a team approach improves the quality, applicability and understanding of assumptions, data, options and decisions.

To map out your WFP strategy and implementation, you can build a *Work Plan* that includes:

- The tactics needed to accomplish each objective.
- The person or group responsible for completing each tactic.
- The timeframe for completing each tactic.
- The status of the work required for each tactic.
- The performance measures you'll use to gauge the success of each tactic.

By including performance measures in the Work Plan, your WFP Project Team can use it for progress reporting to the Steering Team and other stakeholders.

Establishing Goals and Evaluating Results

An integral component of your implementation Work Plan is to establish clear Workforce Planning goals and the performance measures necessary to evaluate their success.

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Evaluating results and making adjustments are implicit in Workforce Planning. If an organization does not systematically review its Workforce Planning efforts, it runs the risk of not responding to changes that occur incrementally – from within or due to unanticipated external impacts.

The evaluation process is much easier, more comprehensive, and more accurate if you incorporate it into your workforce plan from the beginning. Establishing a Workforce Planning Steering Team whose responsibilities include developing an evaluation process will ensure that your Workforce Planning Project Team will know what it is tasked with and what will be measured.

It is as important to conduct ongoing evaluation of your Workforce Planning process as it to conduct a SWOT, Supply and Demand and Gap Analyses before you begin implementing strategies. Agencies often jump directly to implementing gap-closing strategies without understanding their underlying workforce issues; this leads to ineffective strategies and wasted resources. Completing the SWOT, Supply and Demand and Gap Analyses is a developmental process that puts the tools in place to do ongoing planning, and action to have a high quality workforce. Conducting an evaluation of the Workforce Planning process is but another step towards the same objective. For more information about performance measures and evaluation, see the *Evaluation Tool Kit*.

Project Management Considerations

Scope
- Identify how extensive your plan will be and how long it will take to implement. Your Workforce Planning model may be implemented agency wide, in a specific unit of your agency or for a specific job classification.
- Keep your strategies to a manageable number and prioritize them so that you can focus your agency's resources on the most important strategies first.

There are several factors that will influence which WFP strategies you'll choose:

Resources
- Identify the people and skills required and available to develop and implement your workforce plan, and for the planning process over time.
- Determine what resources (for example, databases, websites, structured templates, sample plans) are currently available and what you'll need to build from scratch.
- Pay close attention to technology and automation issues early in your WFP process, including defining system requirements and standardization issues. Other key automation issues you'll need to address early include:
  - Who are the users?
  - Who is going to update the database?
  - What skills will those updating the database need?
  - How often should updates be done?

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Budgeting

Implementing your Workforce Planning objectives should be an integral part of your agency's budget process. This should include dedicating the funds necessary from year to year to implement the gap-closing strategies you've identified. Workforce Planning provides a sound basis to justify budget and staffing needs.

In order to ensure that your Workforce Planning continues to be funded, you'll need to demonstrate that the benefits of WFP outweigh any costs incurred. One way to gauge how much Workforce Planning will cost is to ask other agencies what it cost them to conduct their WFP efforts.

You can also use the data and information you gather during the Assessment Phase to determine how expensive it would be to *not* implement Workforce Planning. For example, you can calculate how much unwanted turnover is costing your agency, and then determine how much it would cost to develop specific turnover-reduction

> **Some Ideas on Cost**
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> In a telephone survey on WFP initiatives, we found that most agencies used internal staff to create their workforce plan:
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> - In Georgia, the state's Department of Human Resources found that, "In the beginning of the statewide initiative it was a very serious, significant effort – 750-1,000 hours to learn the system. Each year, it now requires ongoing tweaking about 80 hours per year. This year is the first time we aligned the workforce plan with the strategic plan and I think next year a full analysis will be necessary on the success of the plan so that may require between 160-180 hours."
> - The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services has 6,200 full time employees. It took an estimated 1,000-2,000 hours to complete the workforce plan. This did not include implementing the plan.
> - At the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Disease, the committees and sub-committees spend about 4-6 hours per month on Workforce Planning implementation. Developing their competencies took 5-7 staff 8-12 hours for each of their 37 occupational groups.
>
> *CPS Human Resource Services. October 2006.* Workforce Planning Telephone Survey Report.

strategies. By comparing the two, you'll be able to calculate a basic "return" on your Workforce Planning investment. (See the *Turnover Tool Kit* for more details on how to do this.)

Below you'll find a *Sample WFP Implementation Work Plan* to help you map out your WFP strategy and implementation. Following that, we've included two *Sample Action Plans (Addressing a Specific Workforce Challenge; Sub-Team Action Plan).* The first illustrates how you can use the WFP model to address specific workforce challenges. The second shows how a Gap-Closing Implementation Sub-Team might use the action plan to capture SWOT data and map out a plan for implementing a Leadership Development Program.

Action Plans transform your information gathering and brainstorming to a task-by-task plan to achieve a desired outcome. There are a number of formats for action plans, although most action plans contain similar components including:

- A statement of the goal or action. For example, to implement a Leadership Development Program.

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- A list of tasks that need to be completed to achieve the goal. Tasks could include developing a training curriculum, training instructors, creating an application process, scheduling courses, conducting courses, and evaluating the courses.

- Identifying the person(s) responsible to complete each task. Assigning the completion of the task to one individual will increase the chances that the task will be completed in a thorough and timely manner.

- Additional resources that may be needed. This area provides an opportunity to list resources that may be need to complete the task, such as a training budget, information technology staff support, or technology tools.

- A timetable for completion. A timetable for completion of the tasks helps demonstrate the urgency of the need and keeps the action plan project on track.

- A framework to measure progress. What gets measured gets done. How will the successful completion of the work plan be measured? For example, a Leadership Development Program might be considered a success if 75% of the employees participate in the program.

Sample WFP Implementation Work Plan

Workforce Planning Step	Tactics	Person(s) Responsible	Timetable	Status (Not Started Started Completed)	Performance Measures/Milestones (Evaluation)	Considerations
Phase I – Assessment						
Develop Strategy for Implementing WF Plan	Build WFP Team	Agency's Executive Team	September 2006	Completed	Agency has created the Steering Team. Members appointed an Executive Sponsor and accepted nominations for the Workforce Planning Team	
	Develop overall timeline for workforce plan	Workforce Planning Team and Executive Sponsor	October 2006	Started	Workforce Planning Team has created first draft of timeline	This timeline will be revised throughout the process as needed
	Link workforce plan to agency's strategic plan	Steering Team and Workforce Planning Team	October 2006	Completed	Steering Team has approved the Workforce Planning Team's focus based on the strategic plan	
	Develop Communication Plan for WFP	Executive Sponsor and Workforce Project Manager	November 2006	Completed	Plan submitted and approved by Steering Team	
	Develop WFP implementation Work Plan	Workforce Planning Team and Executive Sponsor	November 2006	Completed	Project Manager and Executive Sponsor have reviewed and approved the plan for implementation	
	Launch WFP process – issue WFP Policy Statement	Steering Team and Communication Sub-Team	December 2006	Completed	Newsletters, town hall meetings on the WFP process conducted	

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Workforce Planning Step	Tactics	Person(s) Responsible	Timetable	Status (Not Started Started Completed)	Performance Measures/Milestones (Evaluation)	Considerations
Conduct Internal/External Environmental Scan	Assess current workforce: gather demographic data from payroll and HRIS systems.	HR Director	December 2006	Completed	Complete list of demographic data (gender, age, years of service, etc.) for current workforce.	This could be provided by HR staff
	Develop robust method for producing and maintaining updated reports on workforce demographics.	HR Director	On-going	Not Started	User-friendly access to HR information and ability to generate up-to-date reports	Need IT programming support
	Identify the types of external information to collect for your Environmental Scan and potential sources of this information	WFP Project Manager or HR Director	January 2007	Completed	List of external factors to be researched	HR Director identified the factors to be researched
	Identify the types of internal (within your agency) information to collect for the Environmental Scan and sources of this information.	WFP Project Manager or HR Director with key member/s of Data Collection and Scan Sub-Teams	January 2007	Completed	List of internal factors to be researched	HR Director identified the factors to be researched
	Collect data on education, demographics, political/government, economic/social/cultural, geographic, and technology factors	WFP Project Manager and Internal/External Scan Sub-Team	January 2007	Started	Comprehensive lists of the internal and external factors that may impact the workforce (i.e. social, educational, demographic, cultural, political, or technology factors).	Each member Internal/External Scan Sub-Team was assigned to research one or more factor

Workforce Planning Step	Tactics	Person(s) Responsible	Timetable	Status (Not Started Started Completed)	Performance Measures/Milestones (Evaluation)	Considerations
Conduct SWOT Analysis	Explain process and share environmental scan findings	SWOT Project Manager and Sub-Team	February 2007	Not Started	Project Team demonstrates knowledge of environmental scan results and SWOT Analysis process	HR Director appointed Project Manager
	Identify organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats	SWOT Project Manager and Sub-Team	February 2007	Not Started	A comprehensive list of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats relating to the workforce	Project Team surveyed co-workers to develop a comprehensive lists strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
	Establish priorities and develop plan to address weaknesses and threats	SWOT Project Manager and Sub-Team	February 2007	Not Started	A list of the organization's top 5 strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats relating to the workforce	Need to also develop a plan to address the weaknesses and threats
Conduct Supply/Demand Analysis	Conduct Division Surveys – collect internal data about projected resource requirements.	Supply/Demand Project Manager and Sub-Team	February 2007	Started	All Division Surveys received	
	Analyze turnover data	Supply/Demand Project Manager and Sub-Team	March 2007	Not Started	Turnover reports completed	Need to look at problem departments and assess why higher turnover

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Workforce Planning Step	Sample Tactics	Person(s) Responsible	Timetable	Status (Not Started Started Completed)	Performance Measures/Milestones (Evaluation)	Considerations
Conduct Gap Analysis and Identify Gap-Closing Strategies	Conduct a Staffing Assessment	Supply/Demand Project Manager and Sub-Team	March 2007	Not Started	List of the positions where agency has a gap	
	Conduct a competency Assessment	Supply/Demand Project Manager and Sub-Team	March 2007	Not Started	List of competencies where agency has gaps	
	Based on turnover data, create a retention plan for child welfare workers	HR Director and Gap-Closing Implementation Sub-Team	May 2007	Not Started	Retention plan that includes metrics and costs	
	Based on competency gap assessment, develop a competency model for child welfare worker	HR Director and Gap-Closing Implementation Sub-Team	April 2007	Not Started	Competency model for recruitment, performance management and professional development	Expand to other positions
Phase II – Implementation and Evaluation						
Implement Gap-Closing Strategies	Implement a competency model to address competencies needed for child welfare worker	HR Director and Gap-Closing Implementation Sub-Team	September 2007	Not Started	Competency model established for child welfare worker	Need to develop a model for frontline supervisors
	Implement a recruitment plan that: • Improves job fit by developing a Realistic Job Preview • Creates a just-in-time pool of qualified candidates, including appropriate bi-lingual candidates	HR Director and Gap-Closing Implementation Sub-Team	September 2007	Not Started	Recruitment plan developed with an increase in candidate pool by 20%; including 10% of candidates fluent in Spanish	

Workforce Planning Step	Sample Tactics	Person(s) Responsible	Timetable	Status (Not Started Started Completed)	Performance Measures/Milestones (Evaluation)	Considerations
	Implement retention plan for child welfare worker	HR Director and Gap-Closing Implementation Sub-Team	June 2007	Not Started	Retention plan developed and implemented; turnover rates reduced by 10% in first year after implementation	
Evaluate and Revise WFP	Work plan used for updates to Steering Team and Communications Sub-Team	WFP Team, WFP Project Manager, Executive Sponsor	Quarterly	Ongoing	Four quarterly reports are presented to the Steering Team.	Need to evaluate effectiveness of Gap-Closing Strategies, not just check off completed tasks.
	Lessons Learned	WFP Project Manager and WFP Team	December 2007	Not started	Formal report shared with WFP Team and Steering Team. Assess performance measures of Gap-Closing Strategies and make recommendations on how to improve implementation. Submit recommendations to Steering Team.	In conducting lessons learned meeting/focus group with the Steering Committee and the Workforce Planning Team, focus on learning from mistakes made in the process to improve our workforce planning skills.
	Final Report	WFP Project Manager, WFP Project Team	January 2008	Not started	Final Report approved by Executive Sponsor and submitted to Steering Team.	Need to make adjustments to assumptions, strategies, and action plans going forward.

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Sample Action Plan: Addressing a Specific Workforce Challenge

Action Plan Goal(s)	▪ Improve recruitment process so that there is a larger and better qualified applicant pool. ▪ Validate the competencies critical for the Child Welfare Caseworker. Preliminary identification of competencies completed during Supply/Demand Analysis. ▪ Strengthen selection process in order to select highly qualified employees. ▪ Address competency deficiencies by introducing new performance management system.
Key Challenge	▪ Agency has not been able to consistently keep all child welfare vacancies filled. Also projects a huge surge (33 positions) of new positions needing to be filled immediately following budget authorization. ▪ The current workforce shows deficiencies in the critical competencies of Adaptability, Collaboration and Communications (specifically writing skills).

Executive Sponsor or Department Director		**Date**	

Action Strategies How will we address our key challenges?	**Tactics/Tasks Required** Specifically, how will the strategy/objective be accomplished? List the individual steps needed to achieve the goal	**Person(s) Responsible** Identify who is responsible to see that each task is completed	**Additional Resources** Identify any additional resources that are needed to complete the task	**Timetable** Specify when each task will be completed	**Status** Not Started Started Completed	**Performance Measures/Milestones** What measure will we use to determine successful completion of action items?
Improve recruitment process	Implement online recruiting	Recruitment/Selection Specialist.				We will have at least four qualified applicants for each vacancy to be filled
	Partner with local School of Social Work to develop Stipend Program	HR Director				Stipend program developed and implemented.
	Develop/implement strategy for campus recruitment/job fairs	Recruitment/Selection Specialist.				Attracting interested applicants
Validate the competencies critical for the Child Welfare	Identify supervisors of exemplary employees, conduct focus groups, validate competencies.	Classification Specialist				Competencies are validated

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Action Strategies How will we address our key challenges?	Tactics/Tasks Required Specifically, how will the strategy/objective be accomplished? List the individual steps needed to achieve the goal	Person(s) Responsible Identify who is responsible to see that each task is completed	Additional Resources Identify any additional resources that are needed to complete the task	Timetable Specify when each task will be completed	Status Not Started Started Completed	Performance Measures/Milestones What measure will we use to determine successful completion of action items?
Caseworker	Communicate importance of competency model throughout agency	HR Director/Communications Director				Employees/supervisors will understand relevance and importance of competency model.
Strengthen selection process	Implement competency based behavioral interview protocol.	Recruitment/Selection Specialist.				Interview protocol will be implemented
	Develop questions/ scoring process.	Recruitment/Selection Specialist.				Questions and scoring process developed and being used
	Train those who will conduct interviews	Recruitment/Selection Specialist.				Training completed
Address competency deficiencies	Develop new performance management process.	Assistant HR Director				New performance management system implemented.
	Train supervisors and employees on the new process.	Assistant HR Director				Training completed

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Sample Sub-Team Action Plan: Implementing a Leadership Development Program

Action Plan Goal Describe the workforce planning issues identified by the SWOT Analysis that are addressed by this Action Plan	*Implement a Leadership Development Program*
Weakness or Threat Describe which weaknesses or threats identified in the SWOT Analysis are being addressed by this Action Plan	*50% of managers and supervisors are eligible for retirement and there is no existing mentoring program*
Strength or Opportunity Describe which strengths or opportunities from the SWOT Analysis will be employed to complete this Action Plan	*The organization has an experienced and dedicated workforce, and a good training department*

Executive Sponsor or Department Director	*Department Director*	**Date**	*January 3, 2007*

Tactics/Tasks Required Specifically, how will the strategy/objective be accomplished? List the individual steps needed to achieve the goal	**Person Responsible** Identify who is responsible to see that each task is completed	**Additional Resources** Identify any additional resources that are needed to complete the task	**Timetable** Specify when each task will be completed	**Status** Not Started Started Completed	**Performance Measurement** List measures to be used to evaluate the success of the completion of the task
1. Meet with Leadership Team to get their approval and support for plan	Director of Human Resource Services	Demographic data on age of workforce and retirement statistics	January 12, 2007		Leadership Team approves plan and timetable and allocates resources
2. Create team to develop timetable and potential curriculum	Training Director	Time commitment of team members	February 23, 2007		Training curriculum developed and approved by February 23
3. Meet with union representatives to discuss program and get support	Director of Human Resource Services	N/A	March 2, 2007		Formal agreement of union support for program
4. Announce program; open enrollment and begin program registration	Training Director	Need technology staff to develop on-line course registration system	April 2, 2007		50% of employees registering for program
5. Conduct pilot course	Training Director	Class room; managers to …….	April 30, 2007		90% of course evaluations recommend

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Critical Success Factors

By keeping in mind the following factors, you'll improve your chances of successfully implementing your workforce plan.

- **Top management/leadership support**. Workforce Planning cannot become a strategic process without support from top management.
- **Support from program managers and HR managers**. The process must be easy for managers to do and produce results that clearly benefit line managers. Provide something practical that managers can use immediately, such as a new interview tool to assess competencies.
- **Employee involvement**.
- **Timely, accurate and open communication**.
- **Link to other strategic planning processes**.
- **Availability of accurate input data**.
- **Detailed implementation plans**.
- **Keep it simple**. Identify those factors that your workforce plan must address. A common mistake is to develop and track an overwhelming number of strategies. Try to limit measurement to feasible, practical, and few measures in key elements of the process.

Employee Engagement Strategies

Using a combination of employee engagement options is the best way to gather a breadth of employee input and feedback at various points of the WFP process. This is particularly important when you're identifying gap-closing strategies that will directly impact employees, such as reengineering the work they do. These participating employees will also become more familiar with WFP activities, actions, tasks and outcomes.

You can share information and gather employee feedback via online surveys, email or by conducting group discussions. For examples on how to collect employee feedback, see the *Environmental Scan and SWOT Analysis Tool Kit.*